

**Climate Change Workshop Series**



**Climate Change Workshop  
Brokenhead Ojibway Nation  
June 12, 2003  
Sergeant Tommy Prince School**

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## Workshop Participants

Doris Anes  
Jason Aoraluk  
Rene Barker  
Eugene Bear  
Thomas Beauvrey  
Christina Bird  
Niel Bushie  
Paul Chief  
Ron Chief  
Derek Harry  
Irvin Harry  
Gerald Harry  
Cynthia Harvisty  
Jack Johnson  
Stan Kaczanowski  
Kaye, Stuart Kaye  
Vince Keenan  
Edith Langlois  
Warren Lavallee

Chief Tina Lavesque  
Ernest McPherson  
Dan Mosquin  
Mike Pierre  
Eugene Pirie  
Orton Ramsey  
Richard Reeves  
Kelly-Anne Richmond  
Joy Sawchyn  
Lee Scott  
Wilson Scott  
Carl Smith  
Deborah Smith  
Dennis Smith  
Emery Smith  
Jessie Tucheart  
Barry Verbiwski  
Mike Waldram  
Adam Yaroshinski

## **Agenda**

1. Coffee and Meeting The People
2. Opening Prayer – Lawrence “Happy” Smith
3. Welcoming Remarks by Chief Tina Levesque
4. Introduction To The Workshop by Paul Chief
5. Welcome from Carl Smith, President of Manitoba Model Forest
6. Presentation By Mike Pierre – Centre For Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) “Overview of Climate Change”
7. Questions to Mike Pierre
8. Lunch
9. Presentations by Elders
10. Afternoon Break
11. Field Tour/Gull Lake Wetlands
12. Return From Field Tour
13. Feast and traditional entertainment at Sergeant Tommy Prince School

**Welcome!**



Manitoba Model Forest (MBMF) organized a Climate Change Workshop at Brokenhead First Nation in The Sergeant Tommy Prince School.

Paul Chief of Brokenhead First Nation welcomed everyone to the workshop!





## Opening remarks by Chief Tina Lavesque

Glad to see First Nation as well as Non-First Nation people at workshop. Climate change affects everyone. If our environments are polluted beyond our boundaries, it affects all of us. The people of Planet Earth are the ones that must address this. Glad to see small workshops like this are starting the process. It is small groups like this that are sounding the alarm and informing governments that some of what they are doing is harming us. We want to leave something for our children. I hope when you walk out of here today you will be armed with information to keep the cause going.



## Introduction by Carl Smith, President of MBMF

“Some things to think about while listening today! It is because of our needs that we are in the position we are in today. We always want the same or more than others. Think about yourself and what you do locally.”



*Carl read out a short piece taken from Chief Seattle's address to Congress on the environment in 1854. That article is reproduced here:*

“Man did not weave the web of life – he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does it to himself.”

“We know that the white man does not understand our ways; one portion of the land is the same to him as the next for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs.”

“The earth is not his brother but his enemy and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father's graves and his children's birthplace is forgotten.”

“The whites too shall pass, perhaps sooner than other tribes shall. If you continue to contaminate your own bed, you might suffocate in your own waste.”

“His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert!”



## Presentation by Mike Pierre



After having trouble finding the Brokenhead Ojibwa Nation, Mike had technical trouble (laptop didn't work). His claim of being versatile is true and he proceeded to do his presentation in spite of the extra challenges.

Mike Pierre – “We have done a number of workshops across Canada and in my presentation I intend to talk about what Climate Change is and discuss some of the predictions of what climate change can do for us

or to us.”

“Ten people from across Canada saw a need for appropriate information being distributed to all communities so we came up with a kit (proto type). This kit consists of CD's, Videos and Posters. One poster talks about climate change and is one of a series of seven that talk about that very important subject. It is hoped that we can put together about 700 kits to distribute to First Nations across Canada.”

Mike also had with him some videos, which he presented during his presentation and through the lunch period. Two of the video titles were:

“Observations on Climate Change”  
“Signals From The Forest”

A list of simple actions that people can do to reduce energy use was made available by Mike as a handout and is reproduced here:



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## Simple Actions You Can Take To Reduce Energy Use and GHG Emissions

### General Things You Can Do To Make A Difference

- √ Switch lights off in empty rooms
- √ Close doors and windows when the heating is on
- √ Read your meters and compare them to your bills
- √ Slightly turn down the thermostat (minimum 18<sup>0</sup>C)
- √ Reduce heat loss by closing curtains at dusk
- √ Only heat water that you will actually use
- √ Fill in the gaps between the floor boards and the floor
- √ Use energy-saving light bulbs, such as compact fluorescent light bulbs
- √ Check for drafts around doors and windows and fill any with caulking
- √ Insulate your water heater
- √ Line your curtains

### In The Laundry Room

- √ Let clothes dry naturally
- √ Clean the lint filter out in the dryer after each use
- √ Run the washing machine with full loads
- √ Use low-temperature washes when possible

### In The Kitchen

- √ Cook with lids on pans
- √ Try to keep gas flames low
- √ Keep your fridge/freezer at the right temperature (2-3<sup>0</sup>C for a fridge & -15<sup>0</sup>C for a freezer)
- √ Keep your fridge away from the stove/oven
- √ Allow air to circulate behind your fridge
- √ Check if you need a new fridge seal and if you do, replace it
- √ Defrost your freezer regularly

### Driving Tips

- √ Turn off your engine if your car is stationary for two minutes or more
- √ Keep to the speed limit! It is not only safer, but it is less polluting
- √ Drive as soon as is safely possible after starting-your engine will warm up quickly and work more efficiently



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- √ Inflate your tires to the correct pressure. This can save up to 5% on your fuel bill
  - √ Remove unnecessary heavy loads from the trunk or roof-they make you use more fuel
  - √ Choose a vehicle with a smaller, less polluting engine
  - √ Avoid braking or accelerating sharply-this consumes more fuel
  - √ Park in the shade if possible-the sun on a hot engine increase emissions
  - √ If possible, consider cycling to work-it is the healthiest and cheapest option

### Water Tips

Reducing water consumption reduces energy use and GHG emissions. "How can this be?" you ask. Simple! What moves the water through your tap? A pump that uses energy. What heats the water in your house? A hot water tank that uses energy. How do we get energy? Mainly through the burning of fossil fuels or hydroelectricity, both of which result in GHG emissions.

So, if you use less water, you will also be using less energy and contributing less to the build-up of GHG emissions in the atmosphere. Here's how you can make a difference at home:

- √ Put a water saving device in your toilet tank
- √ Turn off taps completely
- √ Fix leaking taps
- √ Don't leave the tap running when brushing your teeth or washing your face
- √ To rinse fruit and vegetables, use a bowl of water instead of running the tap
- √ To rinse soapy dishes, use a bowl of clean water instead of running the tap
- √ Try replacing just one bath a week with a shower
- √ Only use washing-machines and dishwashers when full
- √ Use buckets of water, instead of a hose, to wash your car

### The Three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

In addition to the tips listed in Resource Sheet #2, if you practice the three R's you will be making a big difference in reducing energy use and GHG emissions.

Much of the "stuff" we consume involves a complex production and transportation process before it even gets to us. These production and transportation steps generally require the burning of fossil fuels.

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By reducing, reusing and recycling, you will be helping to reduce the amount of fossil fuels that are burned and consequently the amount of GHGs that are emitted to the atmosphere.

### Reduce

- √ Make a shopping list to avoid buying things that you do not need
- √ Choose items with minimal packaging or with packaging that can be recycled
- √ Choose durable items rather than disposable ones
- √ Buy items in bulk
- √ Take a cloth bag with you when you go shopping
- √ Buy refill packs where possible
- √ Reuse envelopes
- √ Sell unwanted stuff at a garage or community sale, or donate it to someone
- √ If you have young children, consider using cloth diapers instead of disposable ones
- √ When possible repair items rather than throw them away
- √ Try to use electricity rather than batteries. If you need batteries, choose rechargeable ones

### Recycle

- √ Make your own compost by recycling organic waste
- √ Buy products made out of recycled materials
- √ Find out where recycling facilities are in your area

Want to learn more about Renewable Energy?

A Brief Description of types of Renewable Energy and where you can find out more information.

Most of our energy supply comes from non-renewable sources, meaning that once they are removed from the ground, they will not be replaced for millions of years. Non-renewable sources include coal, oil and natural gas. In addition to not being easily replaced, the burning of these non-renewable sources results in large amount of carbon dioxide being sent out into the environment-which directly contributes to the climate change we are facing today. Further, in order to extract these non-



renewable resources from the land, large areas of land, including the plant and animal species, are commonly destroyed or severely damaged.

In contrast, renewable energy quickly, if not immediately replaces itself and is abundant. Renewable energy comes from sources like the sun, wind and water. When these sources are harnessed, they can provide us with the energy we currently receive from predominantly non-renewable sources. Renewable energy sources include:

1. Wind Energy
2. Solar Energy
3. Biomass District Heating
4. Geothermal Energy
5. Hydrogen Fuel Cells

Shifting from the use of non-renewable sources of energy to those that are renewable is essential from us to consider, not only in our plans to adapt to climate change, but in our mitigation strategies as well. Many First Nation communities in Canada recognize the importance of these technologies and are implementing them in their communities. The following NEWSFLASH articles provide examples of communities that are using the technologies.

To find out more about renewable energy, contact the following organizations, or check out their websites:

Canadian Association for Renewable Energy

Phone: (613)728-0822

Fax (613)728-2505

Renewable Energy and Sustainable Energy Systems in Canada

<http://www.newenergy.org/>



Mike Also stated – “We have the knowledge. Our Elders have that knowledge. Knowledge is how we interact with the earth. We need to take advantage of that knowledge. We are at a real serious risk of losing that knowledge and once it’s gone, it will be very difficult to get it back. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the warmest on record for 1000 years. We need to make changes and we have some time now to make good choices and take responsibility for what we do.”



“I read somewhere that running a gas powered lawn mower puts the equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub> into the air as driving a car 400 km.”

“Information on slide says most forest fires are caused by lightening strikes. On the radio this morning, out of 420 forest fires in Manitoba this year, 405 of them were deemed to have been caused by man.”

After asking everyone to stand up to identify themselves and state where they were from, Mike offered to answer questions on his presentation.

## Questions of Mike Pierre

Neil Bushy - “I was talking to one of our elders and he was talking about all of this. According to the Elders, the 1930’s drought did not affect the people of Hollow Water. But they predicted the environmental problems we now have. Our elders have been talking about what has been coming (climate change) for generations. Lake Winnipeg, one of the largest lakes in Canada. We can’t drink that water now.”

Mike Pierre again repeats “We have the traditional knowledge” and offers some pamphlets that outline some things we can do to help reduce gas house emissions.

The titles of some of the pamphlets that Mike handed out were:

- Buying a High Efficiency Wood-Burning Appliance
- An Introduction To Photovoltaic Systems
- Renewable Energy Certificate Program
- Ground Source Heat Pumps
- You and The Canadian Wind Energy Association
- Wind Energy Newsflash
- Solar Energy Newsflash
- Geothermal Energy Newsflash
- Biomass District Heating Newsflash





**Lunch** (Mike showed videos during lunch break during lunch break)



The workshop reconvened at 1310 hours

The organizers of the workshop asked that everyone form a “Sharing Circle”



## Presentations By Elders

Neil Bushy introduced Hollow Water Elders and Gerald Harry introduced Elders from Black River

Speaker – Elder Lawrence (Happy) Smith

“Contamination of earth and water – these are some of the things I talked about before. When we talk about leadership roles, we looked at the rain, loon, bear, etc. There are seven major lines that are tied together.”

“Fish and animals work together in teams. Each one has responsibilities for different aspects of taking care of mother earth. Which clan is responsible for the earth, water, air, etc?”



“The Bear clan is the protectors of the land (policemen). These are the things that we have to bring to our people to show them. There are not many elders left and we have to show these things to the people before it is too late.”

“There were lots of recommendations made, changes that were supposed to have been made. There were about 5000 pages of recommendations that came out at a previous conference. Now it is time we do some of those changes.” “Changes required by industry not only in Canada but world wide.



It’s time we cleaned up the mess that 500 years ago was created when the Europeans came to this country. It is time that we make changes for our children and their children to come.”



“We have to train our people. We have to look at funding from federal and provincial governments for training. We have to look at

doing this in our schools. We don't breathe the same air as our Elders did in the Past. These issues we talk about will be here as long as we are. We have to look at what is being dumped into our rivers, what goes by on the roads through our communities. Provinces and municipalities are all that are recognized, they do not recognize our First Nations."

"I have many friends all over Canada and the US. I have relatives all over. At one time, I went to Alaska. I saw the environment and the oil spills along the shores of Alaska. I was there 10 days educating myself with what I saw."



"When I drank Winnipeg water I didn't like the taste. The finest drinking water that I ever drank came from mountains. In Halifax they dump sewer into the bay and recycle it for drinking water."

"You kind of memorize what you see – what television and the news programs are talking about. Not only here but also all over. Pretty soon, our water quality, the animals we eat, fur bearing animals, etc. will be gone. Americans come and pay big bucks to kill a moose. They leave us the carcass.

We eat it and in the past we didn't waste anything."

"They spray things too like apples and other fruits and vegetables. How do we know what we are eating?"

"Meegwich"

Elder Ernest Macpherson from Black River

"As an elder I am quite concerned about what I eat. The last few years it has been very dry. Now the pollution in the lakes and the levels of the lakes are a cause for concern. There was a meeting in Sagkeeng where the Chief said to the Indian Agents, "we are concerned about our river."

"People have a concern about changes in the lakes and fishing. We talked about changes. There is going to be changes in the lake. All the rivers feed into the lake and there was not enough done about pollution and now we have a big problem."



"The chemicals that they use on the farms all turns up in our drinking water. We hear about things like Mad Cow Disease and we are very concerned."

Elder Ernest McPherson switched to his native Ojibwa language for a few moments then added, “These things have to be respected. Everything goes to the water. Things they use on the highways such as salt all goes into the ditches and eventually into the lakes.”

“When I was younger we just took water from the lake to make tea. Today we are afraid to do that. One of the guys said as long as the water is moving it will be OK. I am still afraid to drink that water. One day, the water is going to be wasted and you are going to get sick from it. It also affects the animals. This is a big concern for us, the Ashininabe People.”

“The land is not being respected. We were told, “never cut a tree down unless you have a use for it”. This is not what we see today. I think it is time that we went into the bush and fixed the landscape, try to make it look like it did before.”

“Meegwich”

Elder Wilson Scott

“About 2 years ago I was thinking about these things and I thought, ‘Humans are going to destroy themselves’. Last year was my record of 63 years on the lake. The oldest fisherman. The lake is not the same. Everything has changed. We have to make sure our children and their children and grandchildren receive education.”



“Let’s not just rely on our governments. Let’s change our own act and ensure we leave things for our children. I am so ashamed sometime that we don’t change our own act. In Canada, we have the constitution. It has the act in it. Let’s change the act. It is an evil act.”

“Meegwich”



Elder Horton Ramsey

“The last 2 seasons we couldn’t go out because there is no fish. This summer we wanted to fish from shore. We went home because there is no fish out there either.”

Elder Ervine Harry

“It is not like before. Now, today, nothing goes on right. A couple of days ago we were talking about 50 years ago. What is going on in the communities? It seems to be getting dirtier all the time. In the bush along the river everything is getting destroyed. Everything is changing.”

“They put things in the river and say it is alright because these things are clean. In fifty years look at what has happened to our rivers.”

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Elder Christina Bird - Black River



“I like to be here to listen to everything. I didn’t go to school. My grandparents used to tell me we would end up paying for water.”

“There used to be not too many houses in Fort Alexander where I was brought up. They were not close together. Today it is hard to find a tree on the reserve. Ever since the mill was put there, they spoil everything. The Hydro spoils our land. They dam the water and the levels go high and the rivers go wide like a lake.”

“When I was growing up we didn’t have cancer and things like that. There is hardly any deer or moose. They said they were trying to protect them but they lied to us. As soon as they caught them, they gave them a needle. We don’t know what kind of a needle they gave them. The animals would go out into the bush and die.”

“They spoil the trees and they spoil the water. We respected everything in our young days. We didn’t spoil anything. They told us when we wanted to cut down a tree, you had to give Mother Earth tobacco so the tree would grow again. Today they don’t do that. They don’t respect Mother Earth.”

“Meegwich”

Mike Pierre shares a story with those in attendance:

“My good friend has diabetes and is now 52 years old. He was given medicine. He used to pick medicine from four different trees along Lake Winnipeg. I would help out. Before he was given this medicine he was taking many pills and was very sick.”

“Over the years the tree line became farther and farther away. The ground was very dirty. There were tracks from ATV’s, bikes, etc. all over the place. We saw the trees disappearing and not being replaced. We came across a bear. The last couple times my friend made his medicine, the bottom of the pot was covered in black sludge. It never was before. When he was taking his medicine he didn’t need to take his pills. He can’t do that anymore and he is very sick again.”

“I try to give something back and try to keep it clean.”

“My question to everyone, especially the elders is, I need something to take back to my people, what can we do?”

“Is there something more that we should do? Is there something else that I can share with my kids and others that I may have a chance to talk to? There is going to be hard times to come but is there something that we can do to help kids maybe seven generations ahead?”



Elder Lawrence Smith – Brokenhead Ojibway Nation

“I was just thinking, around the circle we talked about our traditional values. We never seem to talk about our language. Our values are the land of this country, the air we breathe. Our traditional territories are valuable to us. We need to look to our traditional areas. We have to talk about things.”

“Our Mother Earth, just like our bodies, the heart, the lungs, etc., that’s all what our Mother Earth is. The rivers and streams and lakes. In the Far East, are the yellow people; north are our white brothers, to the south the black people. This is what we have to teach our children. Many times I’ve seen tape recorders used in our classrooms. We are not using our language. The way our elders spoke in the past.”



I think we have to teach our young generation today, our language, laws and the responsibilities of each clan. Our teaching involves our sweat lodge and Sundancers, which the government took away from us because they didn’t want us to be strong. This is part of us. Our culture, spirituality and everything that comes with it.”

“Our young people today don’t know who they are. When I walk up to kids, most of them are white looking. I ask what their clan is. A lot of them do not know. I traveled many communities, I am proud to be an Ojibway person. I can talk to people in other communities in my language. We have to look very strongly at our language and teach it to our people.”

“We have to teach our children about the environment. We have to educate and we have to look for money to educate them. We have to bring them back to our communities. We have to teach them about chemistry and science. We have to teach our young people. Wherever I go, I hear this but I am saying to you people, ‘I am a fisherman myself. There is no fish. Fish are depleted’.”

“Our ditches are full of chemicals flowing into the rivers and lakes. We have a lot of farms right by the rivers all over the province of Manitoba. Our forests are depleting. Our medicines are pushed away by logging. They spray everything and kill them. This is why I say we have to start. Let our white brothers here know what we are talking about so they can pass the messages on to their superiors.”

*Stan Kaczanowski announced that the bus will be here shortly to take the participants on the tour of the Wetlands.*



Elder Ernest Macpherson

“I just want to say a few things. Where do we go from here? That is my question to our white brothers. My concern is everything is disappearing on us. Where will our next generation get their medicine from. We used to not take pills.

I don’t take any pills except aspirins when I have a headache. They have been around a long time.”

“Industry is not listening. Let’s go after them and try to save our land. It is not too late to heal our earth the way it was at one time. Bring the messages to the government so they can begin to do something about it.”

“Meegwich”

Unidentified speaker

“Most of the elders have brought up the same problem. What should we do? Let’s do something ourselves. This fall there is the “Let’s Do It Ourselves” The fundamental problem with this is we never do it.”

“Another alternative is – let’s let the government do something about it. However, People don’t like legislation.”

“SUV’s in Canada are classified as ‘light trucks’. This is because light trucks have less stringent pollution regulations. I can’t do anything about this but the government can.”

“Responsibility doesn’t seem to cut it but governments don’t cut it either. The only way to do this is to get our governments off their butts and stop the emission of green house gasses.”



Gerald Harry – Black River First Nation

“In British Columbia they pay to have plastics, etc. recycled. Why can’t they do that in Manitoba?”



## “All Aboard!”

“The bus for the Wetlands Tour is over there!”



A very motivated crew sets out for the tour of the Wetlands Marsh!

Tour guide – Doris Ames

Native Orchid Conservation, Inc.

Doris explains what the wetland area to be toured has in it. Plants, animals, etc.

Doris’ organization supports the “Save The Gull Lakes Wetlands Project”.



**Entertainment while waiting for traditional dinner!**

## Pictures

The following are pictures taken during the wetlands tour and later on, after a superb traditional supper of Bison, Wild Rice and Swamp Tea, during the entertainment provided by traditional dancers and singers.





## Walking Wolf Dance Troupe

Rhonda James  
George Bear  
Megan Hunt  
Stanley Spence  
Craig Spence  
Bruce Fontaine

